



West Manor Elementary School Language Policy

The purpose of our language policy is to establish the framework of West Manor Elementary School's language development process. It is an evolving document that reflects the language needs of our school. Our language philosophy reflects our instructional practices and guiding principles that is to be clearly communicated and understood by all stakeholders i.e. administrators, teachers, students, and parents.

Philosophy

At West Manor Elementary, we believe that language is fundamental to learning, thinking, and communicating. Language is an integral part of the curriculum, connecting all subject areas and providing a means for inquiry. Teachers at West Manor serve as role models for using and learning language. Therefore, the focus is on application of language through listening, speaking, reading, and writing throughout the transdisciplinary programme of inquiry.

In order to enable our students to be internationally-minded, we believe that children benefit from having access to different cultures, perspectives, and languages through a language-rich environment which includes books, periodicals, and online resources. The acquisition of more than one language helps to enrich personal growth and facilitate international understanding. We also believe it is important to cognitive development to support a student's mother tongue.

Our goal is to continuously improve our language instruction to help advance our students' literacy skill at every grade level.

Guiding Principles

The West Manor staff, parents, community members and students agree that the following are essential to an effective language program. We agree that:

- All staff members, parents, members of the community and students are teachers as well as learners of language, and that we serve our students best when we model excellence in language.
- Instruction should be differentiated and varied, and should include listening, speaking, viewing, reading, writing, and non-verbal communication in all content and enrichment classes.
- All students should learn a second language and be exposed to cultural diversity to increase cultural awareness. We also agree to increase cultural awareness across the curriculum.

Admissions

West Manor is a Kindergarten through fifth grade public school in the Atlanta Public School District and is subject to admission policies set forth by the Atlanta Board of Education. The school accepts all students living within the West Manor attendance zone. Students living outside of the school attendance zone may apply for admission through the Atlanta Public Schools Office of Student Placement. Approval is granted based upon the availability of seats at the school.

Although basic knowledge of English will increase the likelihood of student success, it is not necessary for a student to know English before he/she enrolls in any Atlanta Public School. Generally, students will be placed in the same grade as other children their age or in the grade indicated by previous school records. Students will not be placed in a lower grade level based upon their proficiency in English. A solid foundation in the student's mother tongue (first language) is necessary at the level appropriate for the student's age. Students with limited or no English language skills are screened and based on results, accepted and supported through our English for Speakers of Other Languages (ESOL) program.

Language of Instruction and Curriculum

Additional Language - Spanish

- ◆ West Manor provides Spanish instruction to grades second through fifth grade.
- ◆ Spanish instruction is delivered by a highly-qualified Spanish language teacher.
- ◆ Students in second grade receive the exposure model which is 45 minutes/ week and third through fifth grade receive the proficiency model which is between 90-135 minutes/ week based on the district's world language regulations/requirements.
- ◆ Spanish instruction and assessments are differentiated based on district model and level of proficiency.
- ◆ Spanish is graded and reported on student report cards.

Assessment

All students are assessed on their English language skills three times a year using a universal screening. The results of the universal screener will be used to identify students who will receive additional assessments and early interventions. Language will also be assessed on an on-going basis through the planners.

Support for all Learners

Any student who experiences academic difficulties in language will be recommended to the Student Support Team (SST). The SST is a state mandated school-based intervention process. The purpose of the Student Support Team is to provide teachers with a broad spectrum of strategies and models of intervention to improve their delivery of effective instruction. There are six steps in the Student Support Team process:

1. Identification of needs
2. Assessment
3. Education plan
4. Implementation
5. Follow-up and support
6. Continuous monitoring and evaluation

The Student Support Team consists of a committee of school-based and resource personnel, as well as the parents and when necessary, the student. The team brainstorms, collaborates, and develops modifications, strategies, strategies, and/or accommodations for teachers and staff to implement in order to ensure student progress, success and the receipt of appropriate and effective assistance. Students recommended to the /SST for language difficulties will be monitored based on their area of weakness more frequently using progress monitoring.

Special Education students are expected to be included in all aspects of the language curriculum at West Manor. The Special Education teachers plan collaboratively with the grade-level teachers to ensure that modifications are being made based on the Individual Education Plans (IEP) of their students.

Language B-Language Learners

Spanish is the additional language taught at West Manor. Spanish instruction is given to students beginning in second grade and continues through the fifth grade. Students receive 90 minutes per week. The language model used at West Manor is the content-enriched Foreign Language in Elementary Schools (FLES), in which the second language instruction is enhanced by concepts from the general curriculum. The West Manor FLES program focuses on communication and culture. We integrate content with language learning, using the National Standards for Foreign Language Learning aligned with the state and national standards. The goal of our program is for students to apply language skills to the world beyond the classroom and assist them in making meaning comparisons and connections.

Mother Tongue (First Language) Support

- ◆ West Manor has been designated one English to Speakers of Other Languages teacher.
- ◆ Documentation is translated into mother tongue, based on parent request as indicated on the Home Language Survey during registration, when possible.
- ◆ Interpreters are provided when appropriate to allow for communication between staff, students, and parents.
- ◆ The West Manor media center provides books and other resources in mother tongue to our students.
- ◆ Students are encouraged to bring resources from home to add another perspective to learning.

Second Language Support

The goal of our English for Speakers of Other Languages (ESOL) program is to develop English proficiency, particularly through the acquisition of academic English, in the domains of listening, speaking, reading, and writing.

Potential ESOL students are identified through the Home Language Survey and then through the World-Class Instructional Design and Assessment Consortium (WIDA), Assessing Comprehension and communication in English State- to- State (ACCESS) placement test (MODEL) screening instrument. This determines if a student is eligible for ESOL services.

The focus of ESOL instruction is academic English, the English used in schools and textbooks. ESOL teachers design their lessons to use strategies that promote the development of concepts, vocabulary, and structures which will in turn allow the students to progress toward independent English proficiency and academic success. ESOL teachers respect and build on the cultural and language experience that our students already possess in order to provide for a more meaningful learning experience. Frequent communication with parents is also essential to student progress and achievement. This teacher-parent partnership supports student progress in learning and overall academic success.

Georgia is a member of WIDA Consortium and West Manor follows WIDA's English Language Proficiency Standards for English Language Learners in Pre-Kindergarten through Grade 12. These include:

- Social and Instructional Language
- The Language of Language Arts
- The Language of Mathematics
- The Language of Science

- The Language of Social Studies

Professional Development

Every member of the West Manor staff is expected to share language experiences, knowledge, and strategies with other staff members. They are also encouraged to collaborate effectively with others to make teaching and learning language more meaningful.

West Manor is a school of lifelong learners. To this end, the staff members are encouraged to be open-minded, reflective and more knowledgeable about language. All teaching and support staff will be provided with opportunities to learn more about language in the PYP Language focused professional development opportunities.

Plan for Implementation and Review

The following process will be followed to ensure that West Manor's language policy remains an evolving document:

- ◆ Annually, through collaborative reflective practices, IB PYP Leadership Team will review the language policy for accuracy and IBO updates.
- ◆ The IB Coordinator will update the policy based on feedback from the IB PYP Leadership Team.
- ◆ The IB Coordinator will be responsible for updating grade levels and staff about changes to the policy.
- ◆ IB Coordinator, Instructional Coach, and Administration will ensure that the policy is implemented with fidelity throughout the school year.
- ◆ The policy will be made available to all stakeholders.

Resources

- Roberts Elementary School, 2014, Roberts Language Policy
- IBO, 2009 Making the PYP Happen
- Beecher Hills Elementary 2016, Beecher Hills Elementary Language Policy
- Georgia Department of Education, 2014 Georgia Standards of Excellence (GSE)
www.georgiastandards.org
- Atlanta Board of Education, 2003, Atlanta Public Schools Board Policy Manual. Administrative Regulation Descriptor Code: JBCCA-R Student Assignment to Schools.
- Atlanta Public Schools, 2007, Teaching in Atlanta Public Schools: What Teachers Must Do to Be Among the Best.